

Module 7

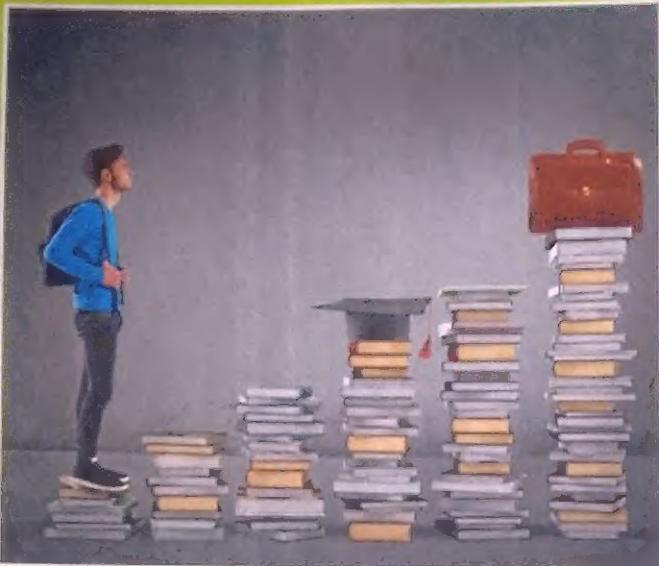
English

It's your life

Chapter 19

What do you expect for your future?





Chapter 19

What do you expect for your future?

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Chapter 20

Will you have been thinking about your future?



Chapter 21

Your future is made of your choices

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Module 7

It's your life

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What do you expect for your future?

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" You most likely heard this question at least once when you were a child, and your answer probably involved a glamorous or imaginative profession, such as an astronaut, a famous movie star, a dinosaur veterinarian or a successful superhero. Thinking about the future at the age of seven can be a rather fun and stress-free activity.

However, when you get older, planning your future may become stressful and demanding, especially when it comes to choosing your career at the age of 15, 16, or 17. As time goes by and you become more aware of your responsibilities, each decision you make, in any aspect of your life, counts for the development of your future. You won't always make the right decisions, but making mistakes plays an important role in the process of becoming a mature, self-assured human being. So, whatever you decide to do in the present, remember it can have a positive or negative impact in your future, influencing the way you will face life.

No matter what road you take for a bright future, full of happiness and accomplishments, the best one is the one you make!

- What did you want to be as a grown-up when you were a child? Has this changed?
- Do you ever see yourself as a successful adult? What features indicate your success?
- Have you ever asked other adults about their careers? If not, what kind of questions would you ask them?



LISTENING

Marilyn is a high school student. Listen to her conversation with her brother Noah and answer:

- Marilyn tries to imagine herself in the future. When is this future?



Alan Carvalho



Noah: Knock, knock!

Marilyn: Noah! I didn't know you were coming this weekend. Good to see you!

Noah: How are you, sis?

Marilyn: I am... I'm great...

Noah: I can see you're happy to see me but you don't look great at all. And look at all those books on the floor! It's Friday night! You should have something better to do. What's going on?

Marilyn: Oh, well, you know me... I have so many doubts about my future. Maybe you could help me out here.

Noah: Well, well, Little Miss in Doubt attacks again.

Marilyn: More than ever. But forget about it! I don't want to bother you with my problems.

Noah: Bother me? Come on, Marilyn, spit it out! What's up?

Marilyn: I have no idea what to do with my future, I mean, my professional future.

Noah: If that is the case, my dear, you might seek professional help, not mine.

Marilyn: Well, it's not exactly that. But I'm too young, and it is hard to decide. I keep trying to complete this sentence: By 2020 Marilyn will be busy researching, teaching, building, exploring... but I can't make up my mind!

Noah: Look, Marilyn, it is hard and even unfair to decide our career path so early, but you should at least know what you like and what you don't like. Have you made a list of possible and impossible careers for yourself?

Marilyn: If I make it one more time, it will be the fifteenth time I will have made it.

Noah: Do the lists have things in common?

Marilyn: No... kind of...

Noah: Oh my! It is worse than I thought. Let me see one of your lists.

Marilyn: Here you are.

Noah: Physics, Engineering, Math, Biology. Gosh! We are so different! My list had Arts, History, Philosophy, Languages, Law, Social Sciences...

Marilyn: See? My head is always in numbers, equations, formulas. In other words, it's like my head is in outer space. I feel woozy...

Noah: You could be an astronaut!

Marilyn: Stop making fun of me for that! I bet Mom told you.

Noah: Told me what? No... You are actually considering being an astronaut!

Marilyn: I was... But I couldn't do that...

Noah: What? Have you lost your mind? I'm sure you could! That's so cool!

Marilyn: Seriously?

Noah: Of course! You will have to study a lot and for a long time. Be prepared to deal with going to college, getting a master's degree, a doctorate... Look at you: all surrounded by books on a Friday night. That may be your future, sis! Space will have never had it so good!

Marilyn: So... you are saying I'm not crazy and I can count on you to support my decision?

Noah: Totally!

Marilyn: So, would you take me to visit some of the NASA visitor centers during your college vacations?

Noah: Of course! Prepare to launch!

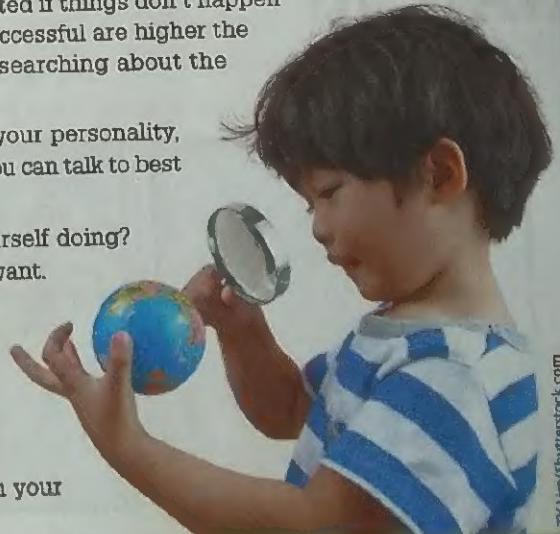
INVESTIGATION

Plan a brilliant future by knowing what to do now

Chinese philosopher Confucius said, "A man who does not plan long ahead will find trouble at his door." Many say that if you plan, you can do something about the future now. If you are very clear about what you want for the future, it will be easier to work on strategies and manners to achieve your goals. Of course we must realize that not all plans work out, and we can't get frustrated if things don't happen exactly as we intended them to do, but chances of becoming successful are higher the more you plan. So, let's practice the act of planning ahead researching about the profession you like the most:

- **Discover who you are:** investigate yourself to understand your personality, strengths, weaknesses, tastes, wishes, and skills. To do that, you can talk to best friends, teachers, parents, counselors, etc.
- **Try to imagine yourself in the future:** what do you see yourself doing? Don't limit yourself, you can imagine as many things as you want.
- **Research about the course:** the process to get to the university, the length of the courses, the internship and interchange programs, etc.
- **Be aware of the possibilities:** what career options will you have when you graduate?

Remember: the choices that you make now will interfere in your future, but you can always change your mind!



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COMPREHENDING the text

Listen to the conversation again and answer the questions below. After that, read the dialogue and check your answers.

1. Noah thinks that there is something wrong with his sister because:
 - a) she was too happy to see him.
 - b) she was studying too much.
 - c) she was surrounded by books on a Friday night.
 - d) she couldn't decide what to do in the future.
2. What does Noah call his sister? What does it tell about her?

3. Name two fields that interest Marilyn and two fields that interest Noah.

4. Does Noah help Marilyn with her decision? Explain.

5. Mark the sentence from the dialogue that does not state a possibility in the future.

- a) You should have something better to do.
- b) That may be your future, sis!
- c) You could be an astronaut!
- d) Maybe you could help me out here.
- e) You are actually considering being an astronaut!

6. In the dialogue, **spit it out** means:

- a) to reveal a piece of information.
- b) to force something out of your mouth.
- c) to say something very angrily.
- d) to ask someone to tell you something when they seem unwilling to speak.
- e) to say something when you are nervous.

NAIL it!

Read the comic strip.



8 What do you expect for your future?

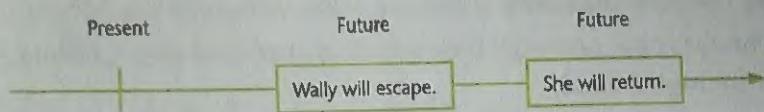
a) Which is the verb tense used to create humor in the comic strip? Explain.

b) Underline all the examples of this tense.

c) Which of the underlined examples represents a perfect tense? Why?

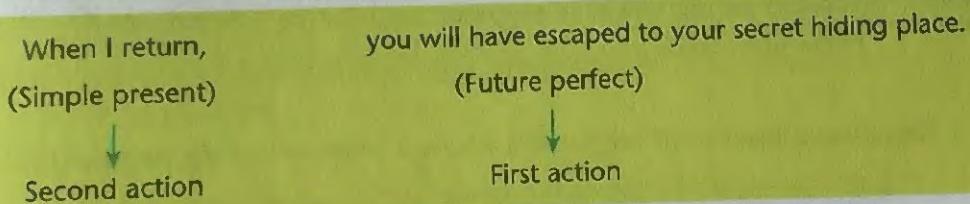
Future perfect simple

In the comic strip, the woman tells Wally "When I return, you will have escaped to your secret hiding place."



By the timeline, we can see that Wally will escape before the woman comes back, so the action planned to happen first is expressed with the future perfect simple.

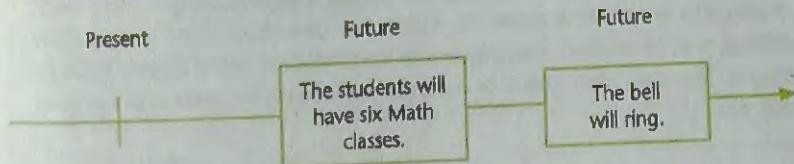
Notice that, when there are two actions in the future, as in the example, the one that will happen first is described in the future perfect, and the second one, in the simple present. For example:



The **second action** is expressed by the time clause "When I return." It is also possible to use other expressions of time according to the structure **by + time expression** (by the end of the year, by 2020, by March, by tomorrow morning, etc.), or a sentence expressing time (by the time we get home, by the time you arrive to the party, etc.) to mark the second event. And the **first action** is expressed by the use of future perfect "you will have escaped."

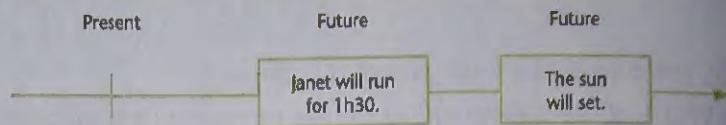
Take a look at other examples:

By the time the bell rings to announce the end of the school day, the students will have had six Math classes.





When the sun sets, Janet will have run for one hour and thirty minutes.



The future perfect simple expresses the idea that something will occur before another action in the future. It can also show that something will happen before a specific time in the future.

In the time clauses, you can't use future tenses, only simple present.

When Bob gets home, the game will have started.

By the time the movie starts, we will have bought the popcorn.

They will have perfected their English by the time they graduate from high school.

Future perfect simple – Structure

- **Affirmative:** subject + will ('ll) + have + main verb in the past participle.

Tina and George will have prepared lunch by the time we arrive home from school.

- **Negative:** subject + will not (won't) + have + main verb in the past participle.

Lilly won't have learned all the formulas by the end of the month.

- **Interrogative:** will ('ll) + subject + have + main verb in the past participle + question mark (?).

Will they have taken enough pictures before the show is over?



TRENDING NOW

Now that you have already started thinking about your future, you may understand that learning the future perfect simple may help you elaborate sentences about it, since we use this tense to say that something will be ended, completed or achieved by a particular time in the future. You can also use it to express what you believe will happen around you.

CHECK your understanding

3. Fill in the blanks with the words in parentheses or the correct form of the following past simple auxiliary verbs.

a) had been written
had been written

b) had been written
had been written

c) had been written by the time you
had been written by the time you

d) had been written by the time they got home
had been written by the time they got home

e) had been written by the time they got home

f) had been written by the time they got home

4. Choose the best option to complete the sentence.

a) When is you think you ... by the year 2050?
I - will have lived
II - live
III - living

b) How many words will you have learnt by the time the class ...?
I - will learnt
II - will have learnt
III - learnt

c) Clark and Clark are. He ... from another planet.
I - come
II - comes
III - came

d) Clark will come out. He ... from another planet.
I - will have come
II - will come
III - come

e) Where ... by the time the day is over?
I - you will have gone
II - will you have gone
III - will you have went

f) By the end of the month, my son ...
I - will have been

- I - I think

II - will have had

III - will have

3. Think about a famous person you admire. Imagine you are going to meet him or her today. What do you think will have changed by 2050?
Famous person:

卷之三

6. Now, exchange books with your classmates. It's your turn to imagine you are the famous person and answer the questions both students ask. Use your imagination and the famous person's profile to give complete answers.

- Q. Can you picture what will have happened in the planet by the year 2099?

NAIL it!

Modal verbs – Future time

Read the comic strip.



Bill Watterson ~ *Calvin & Hobbes*

- What are Calvin and Hobbes talking about?

- Is their conversation about a past fact, a present situation, or a future plan or possibility? Why?

- Which speech balloon contains a sentence which expresses that Calvin's plan will probably not be so easy to accomplish?

- Explain the humor created by the repetition of the expression **hard work**.

Future possibility

As you have seen before, to talk about the future, we can use verbs in future tenses, thus expressing plans and predictions.

We can also simply point out future possibilities using modal verbs such as **may** (**not**), **might** (**not**), and **could** (**not**). **May** expresses a greater degree of certainty. Observe how the modal **might** was used in the comic strip in order to express a possibility in the future:

"That might take hard work." (Hobbes suggests that it will probably be difficult to happen.)

Take a look at other examples.

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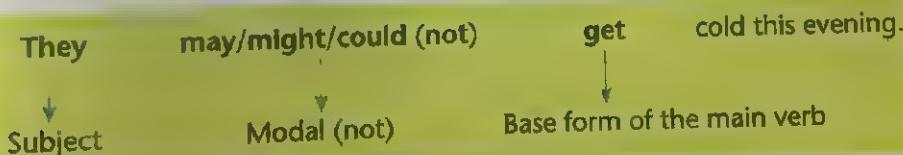
The surfer is getting down a perfect wave!
He might get first place in the competition.

The students could be accepted into the best universities in the country, because they have been studying really hard.

It may rain heavily. If I were you, I wouldn't go out!

Modal verbs (future time) – Structure

We can use **may**, **might**, and **could** in affirmative and negative sentences. The structure is always the same:



May and might are usually not used to introduce a question. Instead, we can use **will**, **be going to**, or the **present continuous**, preceded or not by a question word.

Will you come to Mr. Thompson's lecture with me?
I may go; it depends on what time my Portuguese class ends.

What are the girls going to write their paper about?
They haven't decided, yet. They might write about the humanitarian help in the poor countries.

Is Pete walking home with us?
No, he couldn't. He will have soccer practice.

Another way of making questions about future possibilities is using phrases such as "Do you think...?" or "Is it possible that...?".

Do you think Marilyn will decide about her career path soon?
She may/might/could (not).

Is it possible that humankind will seriously start thinking about preserving the planet for future generations?

We may/might/could (not)!

Attention: May not and might not are used to express the possibility that something will not happen, while could not expresses that something is impossible to happen. Compare:



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Would you like to practice your listening skills and test your knowledge on modal verbs at the same time? Access the following link for an animated movie about the topic: <<http://ftd.li/db7sxs>>.

Also, take a look at the link suggested and review the grammar rules for the modal verbs. After that, do some exercises online and test your knowledge.

<<http://ftd.li/d87od5>>



Notice that Noah is not sure about what time he will be free. If the conference ends early, he will probably be able to have dinner with Marilyn.



Here, Noah is sure that it will be impossible to have dinner with Marilyn because the conference will end very late.

CHECK your understanding

6. Fill in the blanks in each sentence with one of the modal verbs below. There is only one modal possible for each sentence.

may – might not – could – couldn't

- a) _____ you please pass me the ketchup?
- b) Lewis is late for class; he _____ drive to school.
- c) Juliana _____ arrive on time; she is working double shift.
- d) Beatriz _____ watch the presentation tonight; she'll pick her mom at the airport.
7. Match the beginning of the sentences with their correct endings.
- a) A: Are you going to travel anywhere on the holidays?
B: It all depends on airline prices.
- b) Trisha isn't feeling well.
c) A: Bye, dude. I'll see you at the cafeteria.
B: I am sorry, man. I must study.
- d) I need to send this letter today, no later.
- e) The weather forecast has made an announcement.
- () The hurricane must reach the west coast.
- () Could you take it to the post office for me, please?
- () I couldn't meet you there.
- () She may not come to the movies with us.
- () I might just stay here.
8. Read the paragraph and write sentences using may (not), might (not), and could (not) to express your opinion about technology in the future.



The future of technology – what will it bring?

By Karehka Ramey - March 27, 2014

If you went back thirty years in time and told everybody around you that in thirty years there will be pocket devices that have more computing power than any computer around, home cinema TVs with a picture quality nearing that of real life, and then blabbed on about the wonders of technology in the twenty first century, you'd have a hard time finding someone to believe you. But as the years have gone past, technology has evolved at a tremendous rate, and it leaves us asking one very scary question:

What will the future of technology bring within the next 10-30 years?

[...]

RAMEY, Karehka. Use of Technology. *The future of technology – what will it bring?* Available at. <<http://www.useoftechnology.com/future-of-technology>>. Accessed on: Feb. 3, 2017.

9. What is the possible meaning for the expression **blabbed on**, bolded in the first paragraph?
- a) to speak without thinking
b) to reveal
c) to shout
d) to whisper

EXTRA activities

PRACTICE: 7 and 8
DEEPEN: 3 to 6

ABOUT IT

The running writer

Haruki Murakami (born January 12, 1949, Kyoto, Japan) is a serious marathon runner and triathlon enthusiast, though he did not start running until he was 33 years old. He is also the most widely translated Japanese novelist of his generation, and surprisingly, he never dreamed of being a writer from a young age. He entered the writing profession purely by chance. After studying drama, he opened a coffeehouse and jazz bar, and writing was the last thing on his mind.

He had his first encounter with jazz in 1964, when he was 15 years old, after he watched *Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers* perform. That presentation really amazed that kid, who was impressed by the rhythm and made him fall in love with the music style.

In 1968 he went to Waseda University in Tokyo to study drama. School didn't interest him much and he spent most of his college days reading thousands of film scripts stocked at the Theater Museum of Waseda University. There he met his wife, and soon later they opened a coffeehouse and jazz bar in Tokyo, in 1974. They served coffee during the day and it was a jazz bar at night. Many people predicted that wouldn't work, but they were wrong. Murakami and his wife were able to become successful in their business.



In his free time, he began writing, and during his first years as an author he smoked a lot, about 60 cigarettes a day, in order to be able to concentrate better.

In 1982, when he was 33 years old, his life changed upside down: he sold his bar and dedicated his time to writing full time. In order to keep in shape, he quit smoking and drinking and started running. Once again, some friends and family assumed it wouldn't work, and once again, they were wrong.

Murakami wrote in his autobiographical book that his routine consists on getting up at 4 a.m. on most mornings, writing until noon, and turning in, with his wife, at 9 p.m. He says that the act of running and the act of creating are inextricably linked.

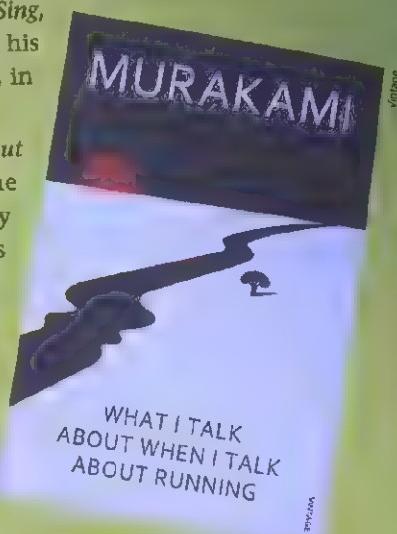
In 1979 he published his first book, *Hear the Wind Sing*, which won the Gunzo Literary Prize. In 1983, he ran his first marathon between Athens and the city of Marathon, in Greece, and it took him 3 hours and 57 minutes.

In his book *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*, from 2010, Haruki Murakami reflects on the important decisions he has made in life, and how they have influenced his existence until now. In his memoirs he describes his preparation for the 2005 New York City Marathon, his triumphs and disappointments. In the book's forward, he writes:

[...] I'm not trying here to give advice like, "Okay everybody – let's run every day to stay healthy!" Instead, this is a book in which I've gathered my thoughts about what running has meant to me as a person. Just a book in which I ponder various things and think out loud. [...]

Even though he refuses to recommend running to others, many people confess their enthusiasm for Murakami and the desire to be like him. No matter if you're a dedicated runner or hardly a runner at all, if you are a reader or not, if you are Murakami's fan or not, his courage to change and hard work to succeed in his personal and professional careers will inspire you to examine your life and perhaps even decide on acquiring a healthier lifestyle.

- How can everyday habits influence a person's life?
- What is the importance of establishing a routine?
- In which ways can your current habits interfere in your future plans?
- What decisions have you made that had important consequences in your life?
- Do you think famous people have the power of influencing normal people's lives? Can you give an example?



EXTRA activities

PRACTICE

Texto para questões 1 a 6.

How to Feed a Growing Planet

Here's an uncomfortable math problem: by 2045 Earth's population will likely have swelled from seven to nine billion people. To fill all those stomachs – while accounting for shifting consumption patterns, climate change, and a finite amount of arable land and potable water – some experts say global food production will have to double. How can we make the numbers add up?

Julian Cribb, author of *The Coming Famine*, says higher yielding crop varieties and more efficient farming methods will be crucial. So will waste reduction. Cribb and other experts urge cities to reclaim nutrients and water from waste streams and preserve farmland. Poor countries, they say, can improve crop storage and packaging. And rich nations could cut back on resource-intensive foods like meat. In fact, wherever there is easy access to cheap food, people buy more than they consume. We could thus all start by shopping smarter – and cleaning our plates.

As Cribb notes, food security is increasingly a collective challenge. It's also a chance "to pull together on something we can all agree about, share and enjoy".

Adaptado de: Amanda Fiegl – National Geographic Magazine, July 2011.

1. (UEPG-PR) Com relação ao que se pode inferir do texto como um todo, assinale o que for correto.

01. Estima-se que, em pouco mais de trinta anos, a população mundial aumentará de sete para nove bilhões de habitantes.

02. Quando têm acesso a alimentos baratos, as pessoas tendem a comprar mais do que consomem.
04. Será necessário reduzir o consumo de água potável.
08. Assegurar o sustento da humanidade é, cada vez mais, um desafio da coletividade.

Soma: _____

2. (UEPG-PR) Com relação aos motivos pelos quais, segundo alguns especialistas, a produção de alimentos deverá ser duplicada, assinale o que for correto.

01. Os eixos magnéticos da Terra se alteraram.
02. As condições climáticas estão mudando.
04. A quantidade de terra cultivável é finita.
08. Os padrões de consumo estão mudando.

Soma: _____

3. (UEPG-PR) Sobre as sugestões do autor Julian Cribb, assinale o que for correto.

01. É preciso investir em culturas mais produtivas.
02. É preciso reduzir as taxas de natalidade.
04. É preciso reduzir o desperdício de alimentos.
08. É preciso investir em métodos de cultivo mais eficientes.

Soma: _____

4. (UEPG-PR) Com relação ainda ao que dizem Cribb e outros especialistas, assinale o que for correto.

01. Países pobres devem melhorar seus sistemas de armazenamento de gêneros alimentícios.

02. Países ricos devem importar alimentos produzidos por países em desenvolvimento.
04. Os preços dos alimentos em geral precisam ser reduzidos.
08. Países ricos devem reduzir o consumo de alimentos que requerem muito investimento, como carne.

Soma: _____

5. (UEPG-PR) De acordo com o texto, nós, humanos, poderíamos tomar algumas atitudes para amenizar os problemas apontados. Com relação a essas atitudes, assinale o que for correto.
01. Usar o bom senso ao fazer compras.
02. Nunca deixar restos de comida no prato.
04. Reduzir o número de refeições diárias.
08. Usar pratos menores.

Soma: _____

6. (UEPG-PR) Com relação aos segmentos verbais *will likely have swelled* e *will have to double*, ambos presentes no primeiro parágrafo do texto, assinale o que for correto.
01. O primeiro está no futuro do presente composto e o segundo no futuro do presente.
02. O primeiro se refere a um evento já ocorrido e o segundo a um evento ainda por ocorrer.
04. Ambos são tempos verbais equivalentes.
08. O primeiro se refere a um fato que, em 2045, já poderá estar consumado e o segundo se refere a um acontecimento que deverá ocorrer no futuro.

Soma: _____

Leia o texto para responder às questões de números 7 e 8.

Psychology of Money

Want Happiness? Don't Buy More Stuff – Go on Vacation

When it comes to spending money on things or experiences, the research is clear: doing brings more happiness than owning

By Gary Beilsky & Tom Gilovich | July 21, 2011

Given that it's vacation season for many folks, we thought it a good time to devote this Mind Over Money post to a brief discussion of what personal finance is ultimately all about. Some people, of course, really enjoy counting their money, deriving great satisfaction simply from watching their bottom line grow, often quite removed from any thought of what they might do with their riches. But for most of us, money is just a token for what we can do with it – pay the mortgage or rent, send kids to college, buy a TV or travel to Italy. And for nearly all of us, money is finite; there isn't enough to do all we want, so we must be selective. That raises a crucial question: if we want to maximize the happiness or satisfaction we get from our money, how should we spend it?

There's been a lot of recent research on this subject, much of it conducted at Tom's home institution, Cornell University. And the answer is clear. If you're conflicted about whether to spend money on a material good (say, a computer) or personal experience (say, a vacation), the research says you'll get much more satisfaction – and for longer – if you choose the experience. Most of us, it turns out, get more bang from the experiential buck. Indeed, when people are asked to recall their most significant material and experiential purchases over the previous five years, they report that the experience brought more joy, was a source of more enduring satisfaction and was more clearly "money well spent".

This might seem counter-intuitive. After all, when faced with a trade-off between doing and buying, many people opt for the material good because "it will still be there" long after the experience would have been enjoyed. In one sense that's correct: The material good lasts while the experience is fleeting. But psychologically it's the reverse. We quickly adapt to the material good, but the experience endures in the memories we cherish, the stories we tell and the very sense of who we are.

(<http://moneyland.time.com> Acesso em 25/08/2011. Adaptado.)

7. (Fatec-SP) De acordo com o texto,
 - a) o dinheiro um dia termina para todos.
 - b) é comum gastar dinheiro com artigos supérfluos.
 - c) fazer uma viagem traz mais felicidade do que adquirir algo material.
 - d) muitas pessoas se arrependem de ter gasto dinheiro com uma viagem.
 - e) a grande maioria das pessoas prefere gastar dinheiro com uma viagem do que com uma aquisição material.
8. (Fatec-SP) No terceiro parágrafo do texto, o modal auxiliar *might* transmite uma ideia de
 - a) proibição.
 - b) obrigação.
 - c) expectativa.
 - d) necessidade.
 - e) possibilidade.

DEEPEN

Texto para questões 1 e 2.

Between now and 2050 the number of people living in cities will grow from

3.9 billion to 6.3 billion. The proportion of urban dwellers will swell from 54% to 67% of the world's population, according to the UN. In other words, for the next 36 years the world's cities will expand by the equivalent of six São Paulos every year. This growth will largely occur in developing countries. But most governments there are ignoring the problem, says William Cobbett of the Cities Alliance, an NGO that supports initiatives such as the one launched by New York University to help cities make long-term preparations for their growth. "Whether we want it or not, urbanisation is inevitable," say specialists. "The real question is: how can we improve its quality?"

The Economist, June 21st 2014. Adaptado.

1. (Fuvest-SP) De acordo com o texto,
 - a) a população rural crescerá na mesma proporção que a população urbana nos próximos 20 anos.
 - b) a população, nas cidades, chegará a mais de 6 bilhões de pessoas até 2050.
 - c) a expansão de cidades como São Paulo é um exemplo do crescimento global.
 - d) a cidade de São Paulo cresceu seis vezes mais, na última década, do que o previsto por especialistas.
 - e) o crescimento maior da população em centros urbanos ocorrerá em países desenvolvidos.
2. (Fuvest-SP) Segundo William Cobbett,
 - a) várias ONGs estão trabalhando para minimizar os problemas enfrentados nas cidades.
 - b) as maiores migrações para as cidades tiveram início há 36 anos.

- c) a maioria dos governantes de países em desenvolvimento não está dando atenção à explosão demográfica nas cidades.
- d) uma cidade como São Paulo será pequena se comparada a outras no ano de 2050.
- e) os países em desenvolvimento estão lidando melhor com a questão do êxodo rural do que os países desenvolvidos.

Texto para as questões 3 a 6.

Why are we so curious?

Cooking is something we all take for granted but a new theory suggests that if we had not learned to cook food, not only would we still look like chimps but, like them, we would also be compelled to spend most of the day chewing.

I hate to disappoint you, but whatever your ambitions, whatever your long-term goals, I'm pretty sure that reading this column isn't going to further them. It won't stop you feeling hungry. It won't provide any information that might save your life. It's unlikely to make you attractive to the opposite sex.

And yet if I were to say that I will teach you a valuable lesson about your inner child, I hope you will want to carry on reading, driven by nothing more than your curiosity to find out a little more. What could be going on in your brain to make you so inquisitive?

We humans have a deeply curious nature, and more often than not it is about the minor tittle-tattle in our lives. Our curiosity has us doing utterly unproductive things like reading news about people we will never meet, learning topics we will never have use for, or exploring places we will never come back to. We just love to know the answers to

things, even if there's no obvious benefit.

From the perspective of evolution this appears to be something of a mystery. We associate evolution with 'survival-of-the-fittest' traits that support the essentials of day-to-day survival and reproduction. So why did we evolve to waste so much time? Shouldn't evolution have selected for a species which was – you know – a bit more focussed?

Child's play

The roots of our peculiar curiosity can be linked to a trait of the human species called neoteny. This is a term from evolutionary theory that means the "retention of juvenile characteristics". It means that as a species we are more child-like than other mammals. Being relatively hairless is one physical example. A large brain relative to body size is another. Our lifelong curiosity and playfulness is a behavioural characteristic of neoteny.

Neoteny is a short-cut taken by evolution – a route that brings about a whole bundle of changes in one go, rather than selecting for them one by one. Evolution, by making us a more juvenile species, has made us weaker than our primate cousins, but it has also given us our child's curiosity, our capacity to learn and our deep sense of attachment to each other.

And of course the lifelong capacity to learn is the reason why neoteny has worked so well for our species. Our extended childhood means we can absorb so much more from our environment, including our shared culture. Even in adulthood we can pick up new ways of doing things and new ways of thinking, allowing us to adapt to new circumstances.

Exploration bonus

In the world of artificial intelligence, computer scientists have explored how behavior evolves when guided by different

70 learning algorithms. An important result is that even the best learning algorithms fall down if they are not encouraged to explore a little. Without a little something to distract them from what they should be doing, these 75 algorithms get stuck in a rut, relying on the same responses time and time again.

Computer scientists have learnt to adjust how these algorithms rate different possible actions with an 'exploration bonus' – 80 that is, a reward just for trying something new. Weighted like this, the algorithms then occasionally leave the beaten track to explore. These exploratory actions cost them some opportunities, but leave them better 85 off in the long run because they've gained knowledge about what they might do, even if it didn't benefit them immediately.

The implication for the evolution of our own brain is clear. Curiosity is nature's 90 built-in exploration bonus. We're evolved to leave the beaten track, to try things out, to get distracted and generally look like we're wasting time. Maybe we are wasting time today, but the learning algorithms in 95 our brain know that something we learnt by chance today will come in useful tomorrow.

Obviously it would be best if we knew what we needed to know, and just concentrated on that. Fortunately, in a complex world it is 100 impossible to know what might be useful in the future. And thank goodness – otherwise we would have evolved to be a deadly-boring species which never wanted to get lost, never tried things to just see what happened or did 105 things for the hell of it.

Evolution made us the ultimate learning machines, and the ultimate learning machines need a healthy dash of curiosity to help us take full advantage of this learning capacity.

110 Or, as Kurt Vonnegut said, "We are here on Earth to fart around. Don't let anybody tell you any different."

NEUROHACKS 19 June 2012. Why are we so curious? Tom Stafford. <<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20120618-why-are-we-so-curious?selectorSection=health>>. Retrieved on July 28, 2012.

3. (PUC-RJ) In paragraph 1, the text suggests that

- a) only some people can learn how to cook food.
- b) cooking is an ordinary activity for women.
- c) humans have evolved because they learned how to cook food.
- d) human beings are prone to spend most of their time chewing.
- e) some monkeys can cook food but they spend most of their time chewing.

4. (PUC-RJ) The author defines "neoteny" as (I. 50)

- a) an endless childhood that characterizes humans.
- b) the unreachable point in maturity for human species.
- c) the infantile behaviour found in human beings.
- d) the retention of characteristics of the young.
- e) the way mammals behave in general.

5. (PUC-RJ) According to paragraphs 9 and 10, "exploration bonus" would be

- a) the knowledge acquired and the reward taken for trying exploratory actions.
- b) the repeated results presented by algorithms in artificial intelligence.
- c) the immediate benefit taken from reviewing several possible actions.
- d) the ability to use algorithms in artificial intelligence studies.
- e) the opportunities brought by the best algorithms.

Summing-up

- e. (PUC-RJ) "Might" in "... might save your life" (l. 12) and "Shouldn't" in "Shouldn't evolution have selected for a species..." (l. 36-37) express the ideas of, respectively:
a) probability – duty.
b) condition – ability.
c) obligation – assumption.
d) possibility – what is desirable.
e) theoretical ability – suggestion.

The future perfect simple verb tense focuses on an action that is planned to happen and is completed before another action or time in the future.

- The structure of this verb tense is formed by **will + have + past participle form**.
- Time clauses beginning with **when** ("When I get home"), the structure **by + time expression** ("by 2015") or **by + sentences expressing time** ("by the moment I get there") are used to set the point in the future.

Modal verbs such as **may (not)**, **might (not)**, and **could (not)** point out future possibilities.